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**Sent:** Friday, December 02, 2011 2:49 PM  
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**Subject:** Dateline DEA: Biweekly Email Informant



December 2, 2011

## **Top Stories from the DEA, November 19-December 2, 2011**

### **Sophisticated Cross-Border Drug Tunnel, Record 32 Tons of Marijuana Seized**

The San Diego Tunnel Task Force announced November 30 the arrest of six suspects and a record 32-ton marijuana seizure as part of a six month investigation that led to the discovery of the most elaborate smuggling tunnel uncovered along the U.S.-Mexico border in recent years. One end of the 612 yard tunnel was located in San Diego's Otay Mesa Industrial Park, while the other end was located in neighboring Tijuana, Mexico, with electric rail cars, lighting, reinforced walls, and wooden floors.

Task Force investigators' entered the tunnel after enforcement actions on November 27 confirmed suspicions about the passageway's existence. These enforcement actions resulted in the interdiction of more than 32 tons of marijuana with an estimated street value of anywhere from \$30 million to \$35 million. Federal officials say based upon their ongoing investigation, they believe this latest tunnel had only recently become operational.

This is the second major cross-border smuggling passageway detected in the San Diego area recently. Another tunnel was uncovered November 15 inside a warehouse near the Otay Mesa border crossing; that investigation resulted in the seizure of 14 tons of marijuana.

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### **Indictment, Arrests of Latin King Gang Members: Murder, Drug, RICO Charges**

On November 21, 14 individuals were indicted for their alleged roles in a racketeering conspiracy in Hammond, Indiana and elsewhere, joining six individuals who were previously indicted. The Latin Kings are a well-organized street gang originating in Chicago with branches throughout the United States. This indictment alleges that they were responsible for at least 19 murders in the Chicago/Northwest Indiana area and in Big Spring, Texas.

For example: three of the individuals indicted participated in the conspiracy to murder Edward Delatorre and another individual on Nov. 26, 2006, and then had others shot while attending Delatorre's funeral. In addition to the acts of violence, the superseding indictment also alleges that the Latin Kings distributed more than 150 kilograms of cocaine and 1,000 kilograms of marijuana. Further, the indictment alleges that two indicted individuals, while employed with the Chicago Police Department, committed armed robberies, including some while in uniform and driving Chicago Police Department issued vehicles.

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### **Two Extradited, Charged with Supporting Hezbollah**

On November 18 it was announced that Siavosh Henareh, of Iran, and Cetin Aksu, of Turkey, would be extradited to the United States on charges of conspiring to provide narcotics and, in the case of Aksu, material support to Hezbollah through an individual whom they believed to be an associate of Hezbollah, but who in fact was a DEA confidential source.

According to the superseding indictment: Beginning in June 2010, Henareh had meetings with DEA confidential sources (CS), at least one of whom represented themselves as an associate of Hezbollah. During those meetings, Henareh agreed to arrange the sale large quantities of heroin to the CS's. The CS's represented to Henareh that profits from the sale of heroin in the United States would be used, among other things, to purchase weapons for Hezbollah. As a result of their meetings with Henareh, the CS's were introduced to Aksu and Bachar Wehbe. Beginning in February 2011, Aksu and Wehbe agreed to purchase military-grade weaponry from the CSs for Hezbollah, including surface-to-air missiles, assault rifles, sniper rifles, and ammunition from (among other places) an American military base in Germany. On June 13, 2011, Aksu and Wehbe signed an agreement to buy weapons for approximately \$9.5 million.

During the course of the negotiations, Wehbe stated that he was purchasing weapons on instructions from Hezbollah. Shortly thereafter, Wehbe and others caused approximately \$100,000 to be transferred to the CS's as a down payment for the weapons purchase. Henareh and Aksu were arrested on July 25, 2011 in Romania, while Wehbe was arrested subsequently transferred to United States custody from the Maldives.

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